

**HOUSE OF SOL
(excerpt)**

by

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HOUSE OF SOL was written in *The Flea Theater's Pataphysics Workshop*, directed by Eduardo Machado, and in residency at the Edward F. Albee Foundation's "The Barn." It was developed at *The Lark Play Development Center* and received a staged reading in *Ensemble Studio Theater* during EST's *Youngblood Unfiltered Festival* in New York City, March 2005.

HOUSE OF SOL is the first of three tragedies from *THE HOUSING PROJECT*.

THE FAMILY

SOL	<i>18. The son. Mixed-race, not of one ethnicity. Heir to Microbits, the world's second largest computer technology corporation.</i>
VICTOR	<i>50. His father. East Asian. CEO of Microbits.</i>
CASSANDRA*	<i>45. His mother's ghost. North African, not African-American.</i>
HELENA*	<i>30. His step-mother. South American, CEO of Sunset, the world's third largest technology corporation.</i>
MARK	<i>22. His lover. West Coast American.</i>

ACT I: SCENE 1: THE MOTHER
SCENE 2: THE PARENTS
SCENE 3: THE LOVER

ACT II: SCENE 1: OLD ORDER
SCENE 2: DISORDER
SCENE 3: NEW ORDER

ACT III: SCENE 1: THE PLAGUE
SCENE 2: THE VIRUS
SCENE 3: Y2K

TIME AND PLACE

A log cabin in White Waters, a fictitious Artic town.
December 31st, 1999.

The action takes place in one day.

**Playwright's Note: As in ancient Greek tragedies, there should be no women on stage. Cassandra and Helena may be portrayed by transvestites or transgender male actors.*

The play should be performed with no intermission.

ACT I

THE MOTHER

At rise: CASSANDRA, (45) stands under a spotlight wearing a white nightgown. She has long black hair down to her waist.

CASSANDRA

Oh pain, I am in pain!

Fate has shut the doors of heaven from me,
sending me back to this tormenting Earth
with a most wretched plague as my vision,
and to save the house of Sol as my mission.

Sol, born from my wounded womb,
lives with a most relentless curse.
And unless I obstruct the house's tragic fate,
I will lose my only chance for eternal rest.

(Or rather, eternal doom
for the wretched life
I have prematurely left.)

Unearthed, I rise from death,
to be lost in strict reality.
Though not flesh and blood,
I feel life finite once again.

Oh, what woe it is to live!
To see, but know so little.
Oh, what woe it is to breathe;
to inhale air, so cold and bitter.

Sun, let there be light!
Sol, illuminate my plight!

As the lights fade, Cassandra disappears.

THE PARENTS

It is now morning. We are inside a log cabin in White Waters, a fictitious Artic town. It snows outside.

There's a small wooden bar, a fireplace and a standing clock in the back. The living room is decorated with a minimal amount of wooden furniture. An elegant glass table rests in the middle.

SOL (18) and HELENA (30) enter.

HELENA

White Waters is sick.
The people are sick.
This whole world is sick.

SOL

There's nothing we can do.

HELENA

But we must do something.

SOL

Give it time.

HELENA

How can they think the world is ending?
And with a *virus* for crying out loud!
A virus that will spread through all of our computers
leaving us homeless, starving and poor.

SOL

We will know the truth tonight.

HELENA

Tonight is too late.
Y2K
is scaring all of our investors
away.

SOL

But who are we to
stop other people's fear?

HELENA

We control their computers, Sol!
All the information,
they fear to loose,
we guard with most attention.
There is no scare to have,
no panic to draw.
But they *insist* the end
is near.

SOL

Then let the people fear.

Sol moves to exit.

HELENA

Wait!
I hope you understand.
Why I've brought you here.
Your father hasn't shed a tear
since Cassandra passed away.
He's been quiet,
taking care of business,
alone,
afraid,
angry.

SOL

His state doesn't concern me.

HELENA

I've told him we can help.
Now the three of us are in it
together.
We are family—

SOL

Family was what I used to have
before Mother decided to die.

HELENA

Your father and I
are very much in love—
and married.

SOL

If only you knew
what love can do.

HELENA

And I hope you can see
I've had no life beyond my company—
Sunset is, *was* my life.
Now, being not only a wife,
but a *mother*,
I don't know what to do.
I am sorry for your loss.

SOL

I don't want your pity.

HELENA

I always admired the way
she put up with Victor
There were times I thought
he was simply
going crazy.

SOL

But he wasn't.

HELENA

And how she loved you, Sol!
She said that giving birth to *you*,
brought *her* back to life.
When I have my own
I wish I can
say the same.
I want to be able to love
my children
as much as Cassandra loved you.

SOL

Save yourself the trouble.
Don't become my mother.
I will be leaving tomorrow.
I did not come home
to stay in White Waters.

HELENA

Then why are you here?

SOL

You'll know tonight.
Come closer...
He's hurt you,
hasn't he?

HELENA

I thought he had changed.

SOL

That's why Mother used to pray.

HELENA

But you're his son,
he will listen to you.

SOL

No, there is nothing left to say.
Except:
Welcome to the family.

Sol moves to exit again.

HELENA

You selfish brat!
Look at what you've got.
My father abandoned my mother
and four sisters and never looked back!
I promised to myself,
since I was young,
that I would never work for a man.
So I studied these *computers*
and became the boss.
By your age, I was already
working out in the field.
Bill Gates, Victor, me—
we are all good friends.
But of course,
only one of us thought of
Windows...

SOL

I have to go.

HELENA

You're lucky Sol.
Your father's building bridges

across this whole world for
you.
He's creating technology that
you'll inherit
to take command of everyone's lives.
When he's gone,
when I'm gone,
all that time we have put into our careers
will not become our legacy, but
yours.

SOL

So that makes us family?

HELENA

All I want is for
you to talk to him.
Tell Victor that he's trying too hard.
He only thinks about
your future,
as if it was his own, and
you've got to stand up against him.
Grow up, be a man,
and *get him to stop*:
the way
your mother did.

SOL

My mother's dead.

HELENA

Which is why now *this*
is your responsibility.

SOL

Aren't you listening to me?
My mother's dead.
Figure out why.

*VICTOR (50) slams the doors open and
marches in the cabin carrying lumber and
an ax.*

VICTOR

God damn,
it's freezing out there.

HELENA

Surprise! I had him flown in
from the city.

VICTOR

Well, what are you doing just
standing about?
Someone's got to chop the wood
before it gets dark.

HELENA

Victor...

VICTOR

The temperature drops
below zero at night!
Tomorrow, the rescue rangers will
find us frozen like icicles
unless we keep the fire going.
Right Sol?

SOL

Right.

Victor hands an ax to Sol.

VICTOR

Here, you know what to do.
A little frostbite now and then
will make a man outta' you boy.

*Sol exits with the ax. Victor takes Helena in
his arms content.*

Thank you dear.
It's a wonderful surprise.

He tries to kiss her. She turns away.

Helena...

HELENA

You have to control your temper.

VICTOR

It's this damned virus—

HELENA
You know that it's not real.

VICTOR
But our losses,
they are.

HELENA
Would you stop worrying
about the money?
There are people involved
when you do business.
Family!

*She exits. He takes a lock of black hair from
his pocket.*

VICTOR
Woman, I am not sorry.
You don't know
what it takes to be
the man I am.

*Sol enters carrying chopped lumber. He feeds
the fire.*

It's freezing out there,
isn't it?

SOL
Feels like New Years.

VICTOR
Look. I found this. It's her hair.
What should we do with it?

SOL
Bury it, for all I care.

VICTOR
Sol...

SOL
(Curt.) Yes?

VICTOR
Where have you been?

SOL

Home.

VICTOR

White Waters is your home.
Why didn't you come to the funeral?
Can't you even bury your own?
What are you gonna' do with me when I die?
Let my body rot all alone?

SOL

I've been thinking.

VICTOR

You should have come to White Waters
when there's a plague in our world.

SOL

But you know
nothing's going to happen.

VICTOR

You tell that to *them*.
Apparently the
Apocalypse
is coming.

SOL

There's no reason to be afraid

.

VICTOR

Your father has no fear.

SOL

Well she does.
Helena is scared of you.
Scared for her life.

VICTOR

What did she say?

*Victor inflates his chest, as a predator,
getting ready to fight.*

SOL

Not much. But I know
what kind of man you are.

VICTOR

Let this be a lesson to you, son:
You must be careful
with passion's fire.
Too much heat,
and you put at risk
your whole empire.

SOL

It always comes down
to *work*, doesn't it?
Work in life,
despite the strife,
keep on going,
never stop.

VICTOR

You begin to sound like her.
She was a blind woman,
your mother.
You know that?
You could never tell
'cause you were the only person
she loved.
Everything was about you.
What about me?

SOL

You
are
what
I've
been
thinking
about.

VICTOR

Day and night, I worked for both of you.
To give her the life she had,
to make you the man you are.
Once you grow old enough,
you will see the world out there
is much too cold for one person.
You must learn when to be gentle,
and when to attack.

Victor fakes a jab at Sol.

VICTOR
Stand up for yourself Sol,
are you going to let me hit you,
just like that?
You're not a boy anymore.

SOL
I don't want to *fight* you.

VICTOR
When you become a father,
maybe, you'll understand.
Right Cassandra?

He fakes another jab.

SOL
She's not here.

VICTOR
Give him a sign.

SOL
She's dead.
Leave her alone.

VICTOR
How can you say that?
Cassandra, you selfish woman,
you're the one that's left us,
left us all alone!

He fakes another jab.

HELENA (OFF-STAGE)
Car!

Helena runs in.

SOL
What?

HELENA
They found us!

VICTOR
What car?

HELENA

Over there.

Victor and Sol look out a window.

It's coming for us.

SOL

Who is?

HELENA

The papers!
They found out we're married.
They'll make it a *scandal*.
Victor, you know they will.
The Post loves mocking us.
And the Times.
And the Globe.

VICTOR

Helena, keep your mouth shut.
You've said enough.

HELENA

"CEO of Microbits marries
CEO of Sunset."
You think that couldn't get in the news?
My God, that definitely is for us.
Sol, you stop 'em.

VICTOR

Yes, stop them.
If it's the press—

HELENA

Tell them we're not here.

SOL

Deal with your own problems.

HELENA

Sol!

SOL

You sleep where you make your bed.

Just do it you little brat.

HELENA

No one's after you.
It's us they want.

VICTOR

C'mon Victor, let's hide.

HELENA

Son, don't mess this up.
Listen to your mother.

VICTOR

Helena and Victor exit.

THE LOVER

*There's a knock at the door. Sol opens it
and MARK (22) enters.*

MARK
Ah, so here you are!

SOL
Mark, I told you not to come!

MARK
Kiss me.

SOL
You have to go back,
go away,
if my father sees you—

MARK
Are you insane? It took me
twelve hours just to fly here,
plus another two in the car.
And look at the blizzard out there!
It's cold,
I'm tired, and
I'm staying.

Mark enters.

SOL
Babe,
you cannot stay.

MARK
This is important.
I bring news from civilization.

SOL
About the virus?

MARK
What?

SOL
Tell me it's coming.
Tell me it's real.

MARK
What have you heard?

SOL
Tell me that when the sun
goes down,
this will all come to an end.
Tell me that Y2K will spread
through our computers and
destroy life as we know it.

MARK
Y2K? Y2K?
Is that what you're afraid of?
It won't do a thing.

SOL
Get your hands off me.

MARK
Don't be scared.

SOL
Why did you come here?

MARK
I have something to say.

SOL
Mark, I just want this year to end!
They're here—both of them.
She had me flown in from the city
and she's expecting me to accept them
like nothing has happened.
Like she had nothing to do with it...
Like he didn't do anything...
Like she wasn't dead...

MARK
Come here...

Sol leans on Mark's shoulder.

Let me hold you.

SOL
Why did you come?

I didn't want you to be alone.

MARK

Mark, you shouldn't
be involved in my
family's business.

SOL

But I *am* involved.
In *your* business.

MARK

Babe...

SOL

Let me stay.

MARK

No. I can't. Tonight
there is too much
at stake.
Having you here would be
a grave mistake.
I have come home
to face my father
and my step-mother—
my heart's not being reasonable.
I am too impassioned.

SOL

Cassandra descends from the skies.

But we have to talk!

MARK

Mark! What good is it,
when the past's not gone?
When flame and fury
are not so wrong?

SOL

Peace my child,
I won't be long.

CASSANDRA

SOL

Everyone's afraid
that Y2K
will make life's logic,
crumble down to nothing.
But is there anything worthy
left here Mark?
This house is dead!

CASSANDRA

The clock is ticking.

MARK

Sol, I don't know how to say this.

CASSANDRA

There's so little time.

MARK

My head's soaring.

CASSANDRA

Why are we so afraid?

MARK

My heart's sinking.

CASSANDRA

We can stop this plague!

MARK

I love you.
Let me stay.
I can't return.
White Waters is too far away.

SOL

Then you must promise
that today,
you and I
are merely friends.
We cannot be lovers
or be in love—
there is too much hate in me
to be that way.
We mustn't show
who we truly are,

if they know too much,
they might go mad.
Mark, can you promise,
you won't be hurt,
by what I must do
to relieve Father's woes?

MARK

Only if you kiss me.

SOL

Just one time...
Tonight,
cold reason
shall be my crime.

They kiss. Lights fade to black.

END OF ACT I

THIS PLAY HAS BEEN ABANDONED.

**BUT, IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THE REST, PLEASE EMAIL ME AT
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THANKS!